

1621 Thames Street, FELL'S POINT
Baltimore, Maryland.

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Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of Maryland

Historic American Buildings Survey
John H. Scarff, District Officer,
1012 Keyser Building, Baltimore, Md.

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<u>OWNER</u>	Associated Mortgage Co., Inc., Baltimore, Maryland.
<u>DATE OF ERECTION</u>	Between 1763 and 1798
<u>ARCHITECT</u>	Unknown
<u>BUILDER</u>	Unknown
<u>PRESENT CONDITION</u>	A ruin
<u>NUMBER OF STORIES</u>	Cellar, three stories and attic
<u>MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION</u>	Brick, with stone foundation walls, wood floors and roof construction, wood shingle roof.
<u>OTHER EXISTING RECORDS</u>	Land records, Records of Baltimore 1729-97, Maps- Maryland Historical Society, City's Bureau of Plans & Surveys, Griffith Annals and Baltimore.

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HISTORICAL DATA

The lands on the north west branch of the Patapsco river were first taken up about the year 1661. David Jones for whom Jones Falls and Jones Town were later named settled there that year. Several tracts comprised the point of land making southward in to the river that was later to be known as Fell's Point and eventually in 1745 to be incorporated into Baltimore Town. These tracts were Montenay's Neck, Copus Harbor, Cole's Harbor and the tract comprising the actual point known as Long Island Point taken up very early by one Poultney. In 1730 William Fell, a ship carpenter had bought of Lloyd Harris and wife a tract of 100 acres known as "Copus Harbor" and erected a mansion which in 1824 was still standing on Lancaster street. In 1749-50 Thomas Sheridine and Thomas Sligh bought the residue of Cole's Harbor and Montenay's Neck of Mr. Hurst and the two sons, John and Thomas, of Richard Colgate respectively. At that time there must have been considerable settlement at the point for lots and streets seem to have been already laid out, for a year later, December 15, 1751, John Moor bought of the "Proprietors of Thomas Sheridine and Thomas Sligh" lot No. 65 in Jones Town. 1621 Thames Street was built upon the eastern half of this lot. In 1732 a new town (Jones Town) of 10 acres had been laid off into 20 lots value 150 pounds of tobacco each in part of Cole's Harbor east of the Falls where Edward Fell (brother of William) kept store, belonging it is said to the children of Richard Colgate. The town consisted of three streets or one street with three courses corresponding with the meanders of the bank of the Falls. William Fell took up lot Nos. 4, 15, 16, 19, 8, 9, 10, 9, 8 and 20. These lots were all on the west side of Bond street between it and the Falls. Lot No. 65 bought in 1751 by John Moor was on the south side of Fell street next to the river between Market (now Broadway) and Bond. Thames street at that time was a continuation of Fell street west of Bond. Originally lot No. 65 was 60 feet wide. Today 1621 Thames street is on the eastern half of that lot. In 1745 the property of wharfs, "made out of water or where it usually flows" was secured to the improvers. In 1763 Edward Fell the son of the first William laid off part of the tract of land which his father had purchased of Harris, Carter and others, buying of Sligh, himself part of Montenay's Neck and all two years before resurveyed and patented by the name of "Fell's Prospect" with streets north and south and east and west except of the extreme point itself where he was governed by the course of the water."

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4. BALT

23-

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It is believed by this writer that by this date lot No. 65 Fell street, Baltimore Town was in the possession of the Fell family.

Edward Fell was the only son of the first William. He had married his cousin Ann Bond, the daughter of John Bond, a merchant and prominent citizen of Fell's Point and had inherited in 1746 from his father the greater part of his estate, and also from his uncle Edward. He died in 1766 at the age of 33 and left his estate, 1/4 to his wife and 3/4 including his "mansion house and adjacent land" to his only child, William, a child of seven. To him also went the house in which "my father-in-law John Bond lives". It is assumed that Edward at the time of his death was living in the house built by his father "in Lancaster street". The family burial plot is even today nearby on Shakespeare street. Perhaps he had built another house soon after the streets were laid out in 1763 as a speculation to attract well-to-do men to the neighborhood. John Bond, his father-in-law, had large holdings in both Cecil and Harford Counties, and may have used as a town residence a house belonging to his son-in-law, Edward Fell. It seems improbable that that house was 1621 Thames street for the evidence of the architecture itself would point to date around 1790.

The records around this point are exceedingly obscure. Three years after the death of her husband the widow Fell sold to her father various properties on Fell's Point for 50 pounds and in 1798 the estate of John Bond sold to William Jackson various properties on Fell's Point for 3000 pounds. It is believed this house was one of those properties, although how John Bond had acquired it is unknown. In 1798 the same year the property passed by purchase from William Jackson to Nathaniel Thompson for 1000 pounds. In 1818 Nathaniel Thompson having died it passed from his estate by purchase to Dr. Joseph Allender who owned it 1823 when Robert Oliver bought the wharf adjoining the rear. October 20, 1846 the estate of Dr. Allender sold it to the Seaman's Union Bethel Society for the sum of \$4500.00

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4. BALTT

13-

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HISTORICAL DATA Cont'd.

who owned it October 25, 1869 when it was sold to James J. Cockrill who paid \$5000.00 for it. His estate sold it to William Hofmeister May 18, 1900. It was this owner that sold the interior details to Messers Shriver and Buckler. In 1924 it was acquired by default of mortgage by the Sun Mortgage Co. The same year it was taken over by the State Building & Loan Association, and the next year by payment of mortgage it was taken over by John G. Kipp, et al. In 1928 it was acquired by Charles J. Eder through purchase of the mortgage. He conducted a carpet cleaning business on the premises. It has been owned since August 22, 1936 by the present owners, The Associated Mortgage Cos., Inc. who acquired it by default of mortgage.

That part of Baltimore now known as Fell's Point owes its commercial existance to shipping. It started with the first sailing ships that plied the waters of the Chesapeake and ventured even across the Atlantic ocean from wharfs around the point. It reached its hey-day with the perfection of the famous clipper ship which out of the port of Baltimore sailed the seven seas and declined with the advent of the steamship and the rise to first place of other ports along the Atlantic coast.

A map of the district in 1792 shows the streets and wharfs along the water front about as they are today. Thames street (which is now pronounced in the neighborhood as spelled) is, as today, branching off the foot of Broadway and running along the water front with buildings between the street and the docks.

Thames street was then an early strand. 1621 was obviously built as one of a close built row with houses with neighbors adjoining on each side. There could never have been an alley way at the rear because service access is provided for through the second arch on the street front. The rear of the property may then as now have been occupied with warehouses blocking a view of the water.

The old house today is in the last stages of delapidation.

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It has been a prey to neglect, antique hunters, fire, vandalism and now the elements. But enough remains to suggest its original elegance. Not a vestige of the entrance doors remain. The cornice carries modillions with details of white metal nailed to wooden blocks. The interior over doors have been measured in their present location, and drawn where they first belonged. But one mantel was discovered and that obviously has certain parts missing. It has been drawn as now existing, although it is believed to have had pilaster caps which would have made it a few inches higher. This is born out by the old ghost which shows in the plaster breast of bed room No.1. It is now in the home of Mr. Riggin Buckler, A.I.A. who also owns a curved over door from the stair landing. Several other over doors and some of the curved architecture arches are in the home of Mr. J. Alexis Shriver, "Olney" Harford County, Maryland. It is believed that the kitchen was once in the rear basement. The small first room in the rear building may have been a breakfast room. The rear building was at one time extended and enlarged.

Local legends associate the building with the home of the Fell family, and say it fronted at one time on Lancaster street. It is so obviously built as a house in a row and Thames street of ancient date it is thought this legend incorrect. It is thought to have been built between the years 1763 and 1798 when the estate of John Bond sold it to William Jackson. John Bond, merchant, was one of the first citizens of that part of town, a Justice of the peace and a rich man. He owned land not only in Baltimore but in Cecil and Harford Counties. A street in Baltimore bears his name, A nearby street that of his wife, Aliceanna, another of his daughter, Ann and a large tract in Harford County is still known as Bond's Forreset.

Today the old house on Thames street is abandoned. Until recently the front room on the first floor was used as a plumber's shop. Even this has now gone and the winds blow dismally through the empty house. Rooms that once knew the manifold activities of family life hear now only the rain dripping from floor to floor and the hollow echoes of the ship noises in the nearby harbor.

John H. Craft
Rev. 7-28-63
THW